

## AN ANONYMOUS SIXTEENTH-CENTURY TREATISE ON LOCUSTS.

— A slender volume acquired by the Michigan State University Library from the dealer H. P. Kraus is of historical interest as a very early imprint to be concerned entirely with an entomological topic. The anonymous treatise, *Discorso sopra il nuovo apparir delle cavallette*, has a colophon dated 1 October 1542, and was printed by Francesco Rossi of Ferrara. Dedicated by the author to his patron Nicolo Vicenzi, the pamphlet was inspired by a visitation of locusts to the area.

The first section of the *Discorso* is a discussion of locust metamorphosis and behaviour, with a few comments on anatomy and some excursions, taken from Aristotle, Pliny, Albertus Magnus and more contemporary writers, but including no personal observations by the author. As may be expected in a Renaissance text, some of the content is fabulous, so that we read of the enormous locust of India ("lunghe tre piedi"), and another remarkable orthopteron which kills snakes by biting their throats. However, the compilation is not inferior to other entomological efforts made before the more critical attitude toward natural history which was developing in the sixteenth century. In the second section, an historical account of locust and other orthopteran 'plagues' from ancient times to the present is assembled from various sources. The pamphlet reflects the belief, still held in the Renaissance, that visitations of locusts were indicative of human events other than the agricultural disasters which they caused, and could be as useful as the appearance of comets and other unusual occurrences in predicting political upheavals, the death of monarchs, and sundry calamities. The final section explains how locusts can be controlled. The author suggests flooding fields to destroy eggs; the use of smoke and ditches filled with brine to combat 'plagues'; and such anti-locust specifics as oil of wormwood, extract of centaury, and bitter lupins boiled in brine. Bats may be used to ward off locusts, which will not descend to the fields if they see these enemies tethered in trees. (Was such a curious method ever actually attempted?) Locusts will also continue their flight without causing harm if residents of the area will remain indoors so that the insects *cannot* see *them* — an ancient Greek belief. Tithing to the Church can prevent locust visitations, and the hordes may be driven away by a traditional expedient also used in other cases of calamity, that of a figure of authority declaiming in the fields — reading the riot act, as it were.

Despite a census, no other copy of the *Discorso* has yet been located. Hopefully a more intensive survey of Italian libraries will provide additional data. The Centre for Overseas Pest Research (which maintains the bibliographical data of the former Anti-Locust Centre) has no record of the pamphlet. Are any readers of the *Record* able to identify the author? The Michigan State University copy, which collates A-B<sup>4</sup>, C<sup>2</sup>; 20pp., is from the library

of the legendary British bibliophile Richard Heber (1773-1833), and bears his 'Bibliotheca Heberiana' stamp. An examination of the eight volumes of catalogues of the consecutive sales of Heber's books has not revealed mention of the imprint, and I assume that it was included in one of the many groups of pamphlets sold as lots. I am grateful to Ellen B. Wells of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. for valuable assistance in translation. — R. S. WILKINSON, 228 Ninth Street, N. E. Washington, D.C. 20002, U.S.A.

THE EARLIEST KNOWN BRITISH CAPTURE OF CRYPTOPLEURUM SUBTILE SHARP (COL.: HYDROPHILIDAE). — Among the duplicate Coleoptera left by my late friend G. H. Ashe I have detected an example of this comparative newcomer to our fauna, evidently not distinguished by him from the common *C. minutum* F., and bearing the data 'Shute Park/hedge clippings/25.ix.58'. The locality is near Colyton, S. Devon — an addition to the few counties from which the species is yet recorded — but of still more interest is the date, which is 8 years before the first published captures in Cheshire and Merionethshire in 1966 (C. Johnson, 1967, *Entom.*, **100**: 172-3). This year (23.viii.83) I have taken a specimen at m.v. light here at Charlton; there has, I think been no further published record since I obtained one in the same way at Blackheath, a mere 2½ miles distant, 16 years before (Allen, 1968, *Ent. mon. Mag.*, **104**:207). A. A. ALLEN.

RECORDS OF TWO TEPHRITIDS (DIPT.) IN E. KENT AND W. NORFOLK. — *Paroxyyna loewiana* Hend.: a specimen of this local species, whose foodplant is *Solidago virgaurea* L., was swept in a clearing in the Ham Street Woods (11.vi.64) and kindly confirmed some years ago by Mr. P. J. Chandler, who informed me that it should be a new record for East Kent (V.C.15). *Tephritis formosa* Loew; one swept from *Tanacetum vulgare* L. in a field near Faversham Creek (21.viii.68); this however is not, apparently, a recognized foodplant of *T. formosa*, among which are listed species of *Hypochoeris*, *Crepis*, and *Sonchus*. Recently (4.viii.83) I swept several examples from a dense and tall cypress hedge at Foulden, Norfolk. No likely host was at hand, so probably, as the situation was rather bleak and open, the flies had been carried there from a distance on the wind and sought the hedge for shelter. I can say nothing as to the previous status of this very local species in either Kent or Norfolk; I have it also from Windsor Forest, cf. *Ent. Rec.*, **95**:24. — A. A. ALLEN.

WALDO L. MCATEE'S COLLECTION OF ENTOMOLOGICAL MANUSCRIPTS AND LABELS IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. — Extensive collections of the handwriting of entomologists are always of value to taxonomists, especially when they include some representative labels. The American naturalist Waldo Lee McAtee (1883-1962) is best remembered for his research on the food habits of verte-